

Feed survey summary – as at April 24, 2020

- Many parts of the country received significant rain in the first few weeks of April, however, anecdotally those in affected regions say the situation remains unchanged for now, but they are optimistic that the on-farm feed situation will improve over the next few weeks.
- While there has been recent rainfall in Northland, East Coast and Hawkes Bay and Manawatu, farmers in these regions are still in a significant feed deficit. Water availability in these regions remains a concern.
- Average pasture cover in these regions is 30-40 per cent below target for the time of year and in Northland some pastures are rotting down due to recent rainfall. This is resulting in covers not building, although pasture growth rates have increased.
- Sheep and beef farmers across the country are eating into winter feed reserves. This is due to having higher stock numbers on farm than normal due to the recent constraints in culling stock, and the inability to purchase supplementary feed.
- Meat works in the North Island anticipate they will be caught up with backlog this month (May) while South Island processors expect to be caught up by June.
- The feed situation is changing daily. There is an upward trend in demand and there is little supplementary feed available for purchase, and much of what is available is considered costly.
- Nitrogen fertiliser is going on and is a key tool to building pasture cover for both sectors, while autumn fertiliser is also being applied to farms in both sectors.
- Excluding Northland, East Coast and Hawkes Bay and Manawatu, winter and spring is going to be tight from a feed point of view, but farmers are confident they can get through.
- Dairy farmers across the country are drying off their herds.
- There is some feed from the South Island being sold to North Island farmers. However, the cost of transport is a concern.
- Winter crops in Southland are down and this is causing concern for how farmers are going to manage for feed in the coming months. At the same time, there is less winter grazing (for dry dairy cows) available.